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16 CIGNA HEALTH AND LIFE INSURANCE COMPANY and
17 CONNECTICUT GENERAL LIFE INSURANCE COMPANY

18 **UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT**
19 **FOR THE CENTRAL DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA**

20 NOVEON SURGERY CENTER, INC.

21 Plaintiff,

22 v.

23 CIGNA HEALTH AND LIFE
24 INSURANCE COMPANY, et al.

25 Defendants.

Case No. 2:23-CV-00377-MWF-MAR
[Hon. Michael W. Fitzgerald]

STIPULATED PROTECTIVE ORDER

**[DISCOVERY MATTER: Referred to
Magistrate Judge Margo A. Rocconi]**

Complaint Filed: January 18, 2023
Trial Date: April 23, 2024

1 **1. INTRODUCTION**

2 **1.1 PURPOSES AND LIMITATIONS**

3 Discovery in this action is likely to involve production of confidential,
4 proprietary, or private information for which special protection from public
5 disclosure and from use for any purpose other than prosecuting this litigation may
6 be warranted. Accordingly, the parties hereby stipulate to and petition the Court to
7 enter the following Stipulated Protective Order. The parties acknowledge that this
8 Order does not confer blanket protections on all disclosures or responses to
9 discovery and that the protection it affords from public disclosure and use extends
10 only to the limited information or items that are entitled to confidential treatment
11 under the applicable legal principles. The parties further acknowledge, as set forth
12 in Section 12.3, below, that this Stipulated Protective Order does not entitle them
13 to file confidential information under seal; Civil Local Rule 79-5 sets forth the
14 procedures that must be followed and the standards that will be applied when a
15 party seeks permission from the court to file material under seal.

16 **1.2 GOOD CAUSE STATEMENT**

17 This action involves a health care provider, a health benefits administrator,
18 and multiple managed healthcare benefits plans. As such, discovery is likely to
19 involve trade secrets, contracts including pricing information, patient health
20 information protected by the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act
21 ("HIPAA"), and other valuable commercial, financial, and/or proprietary
22 information for which special protection from public disclosure and from use for
23 any purpose other than prosecution of this action is warranted. Such confidential
24 and proprietary materials and information consist of, among other things,
25 confidential business or financial information, information regarding confidential
26 business practices, or other confidential commercial information (including
27 information implicating privacy rights of third parties), confidential patient health
28 information, information otherwise generally unavailable to the public, or which

1 may be privileged or otherwise protected from disclosure under state or federal
2 statutes, court rules, case decisions, or common law. Accordingly, to expedite the
3 flow of information, to facilitate the prompt resolution of disputes over
4 confidentiality of discovery materials, to adequately protect information the parties
5 are entitled to keep confidential, to ensure that the parties are permitted reasonable
6 necessary uses of such material in preparation for and in the conduct of trial, to
7 address their handling at the end of the litigation, and serve the ends of justice, a
8 protective order for such information is justified in this matter. It is the intent of
9 the parties that information will not be designated as confidential for tactical
10 reasons and that nothing be so designated without a good faith belief that it has
11 been maintained in a confidential, non-public manner, and there is good cause why
12 it should not be part of the public record of this case.

13 **2. DEFINITIONS**

14 2.1 Action: Noveon Surgery Center, Inc. v. Cigna Health and Life Insurance
15 Company, et al. (Case No. 2:23-CV-00377-MWF-MAR).

16 2.2 Challenging Party: a Party or Non-Party that challenges the designation
17 of information or items under this Order.

18 2.3 “CONFIDENTIAL” Information or Items: information (regardless of
19 how it is generated, stored or maintained) or tangible things that qualify for
20 protection under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 26(c), and as specified above in
21 the Good Cause Statement.

22 2.4 Counsel: Outside Counsel of Record and House Counsel (as well as their
23 support staff).

24 2.5 Designating Party: a Party or Non-Party that designates information or
25 items that it produces in disclosures or in responses to discovery as
26 “CONFIDENTIAL.”

27 2.6 Disclosure or Discovery Material: all items or information, regardless of
28 the medium or manner in which it is generated, stored, or maintained (including,

1 among other things, testimony, transcripts, and tangible things), that are produced
2 or generated in disclosures or responses to discovery in this matter.

3 2.7 Expert: a person with specialized knowledge or experience in a matter
4 pertinent to the litigation who has been retained by a Party or its counsel to serve
5 as an expert witness or as a consultant in this Action.

6 2.8 House Counsel: attorneys who are employees of a party to this Action.
7 House Counsel does not include Outside Counsel of Record or any other outside
8 counsel.

9 2.9 Non-Party: any natural person, partnership, corporation, association, or
10 other legal entity not named as a Party to this action.

11 2.10 Outside Counsel of Record: attorneys who are not employees of a party
12 to this Action but are retained to represent or advise a party to this Action and have
13 appeared in this Action on behalf of that party or are affiliated with a law firm
14 which has appeared on behalf of that party, and includes support staff.

15 2.11 Party: any party to this Action, including all of its officers, directors,
16 employees, consultants, retained experts, and Outside Counsel of Record (and their
17 support staffs).

18 2.12 Producing Party: a Party or Non-Party that produces Disclosure or
19 Discovery Material in this Action.

20 2.13 Professional Vendors: persons or entities that provide litigation support
21 services (e.g., photocopying, videotaping, translating, preparing exhibits or
22 demonstrations, and organizing, storing, or retrieving data in any form or medium)
23 and their employees and subcontractors.

24 2.14 Protected Material: any Disclosure or Discovery Material that is
25 designated as “CONFIDENTIAL.”

26 2.15 Receiving Party: a Party that receives Disclosure or Discovery Material
27 from a Producing Party.

1 **3. SCOPE**

2 The protections conferred by this Stipulation and Order cover not only
3 Protected Material (as defined above), but also (1) any information copied or
4 extracted from Protected Material; (2) all copies, excerpts, summaries, or
5 compilations of Protected Material; and (3) any testimony, conversations, or
6 presentations by Parties or their Counsel that might reveal Protected Material.

7 Any use of Protected Material at trial will be governed by the orders of the
8 trial judge. This Order does not govern the use of Protected Material at trial.

9 **4. DURATION**

10 Even after final disposition of this litigation, the confidentiality obligations
11 imposed by this Order will remain in effect until a Designating Party agrees
12 otherwise in writing or a court order otherwise directs. Final disposition will be
13 deemed to be the later of (1) dismissal of all claims and defenses in this Action,
14 with or without prejudice; and (2) final judgment herein after the completion and
15 exhaustion of all appeals, rehearings, remands, trials, or reviews of this Action,
16 including the time limits for filing any motions or applications for extension of
17 time pursuant to applicable law.

18 **5. DESIGNATING PROTECTED MATERIAL**

19 5.1 Exercise of Restraint and Care in Designating Material for Protection.
20 Each Party or Non-Party that designates information or items for protection under
21 this Order must take care to limit any such designation to specific material that
22 qualifies under the appropriate standards. The Designating Party must designate for
23 protection only those parts of material, documents, items, or oral or written
24 communications that qualify so that other portions of the material, documents,
25 items, or communications for which protection is not warranted are not swept
26 unjustifiably within the ambit of this Order.

27 Mass, indiscriminate, or routinized designations are prohibited. Designations
28 that are shown to be clearly unjustified or that have been made for an improper

1 purpose (e.g., to unnecessarily encumber the case development process or to
2 impose unnecessary expenses and burdens on other parties) may expose the
3 Designating Party to sanctions.

4 If it comes to a Designating Party's attention that information or items that it
5 designated for protection do not qualify for protection, that Designating Party must
6 promptly notify all other Parties that it is withdrawing the inapplicable designation.

7 **5.2 Manner and Timing of Designations.** Except as otherwise provided in
8 this Order (see, e.g., second paragraph of section 5.2(a) below), or as otherwise
9 stipulated or ordered, Disclosure or Discovery Material that qualifies for protection
10 under this Order must be clearly so designated before the material is disclosed or
11 produced.

12 Designation in conformity with this Order requires:

13 (a) for information in documentary form (e.g., paper or electronic
14 documents, but excluding transcripts of depositions or other pretrial or trial
15 proceedings), that the Producing Party affix at a minimum, the legend
16 “CONFIDENTIAL” (hereinafter “CONFIDENTIAL legend”), to each page
17 that contains protected material. If only a portion or portions of the material
18 on a page qualifies for protection, the Producing Party also must clearly
19 identify the protected portion(s) (e.g., by making appropriate markings in the
20 margins).

21 A Party or Non-Party that makes original documents available for inspection
22 need not designate them for protection until after the inspecting Party has indicated
23 which documents it would like copied and produced. During the inspection and
24 before the designation, all of the material made available for inspection will be
25 deemed “CONFIDENTIAL.” After the inspecting Party has identified the
26 documents it wants copied and produced, the Producing Party must determine
27 which documents, or portions thereof, qualify for protection under this Order.
28 Then, before producing the specified documents, the Producing Party must affix

1 the “CONFIDENTIAL legend” to each page that contains Protected Material. If
2 only a portion or portions of the material on a page qualifies for protection, the
3 Producing Party also must clearly identify the protected portion(s) (e.g., by making
4 appropriate markings in the margins).

5 (b) for testimony given in depositions that the Designating Party
6 identify the Disclosure or Discovery Material on the record, before the close
7 of the deposition all protected testimony.

8 (c) for information produced in some form other than documentary
9 and for any other tangible items, that the Producing Party affix in a
10 prominent place on the exterior of the container or containers in which the
11 information is stored the legend “CONFIDENTIAL.” If only a portion or
12 portions of the information warrants protection, the Producing Party, to the
13 extent practicable, will identify the protected portion(s).

14 5.3 Inadvertent Failures to Designate. If timely corrected, an inadvertent
15 failure to designate qualified information or items does not, standing alone, waive
16 the Designating Party’s right to secure protection under this Order for such
17 material. Upon timely correction of a designation, the Receiving Party must make
18 reasonable efforts to assure that the material is treated in accordance with the
19 provisions of this Order.

20 **6. CHALLENGING CONFIDENTIALITY DESIGNATIONS**

21 6.1 Timing of Challenges. Any Party or Non-Party may challenge a
22 designation of confidentiality at any time that is consistent with the Court’s
23 Scheduling Order.

24 6.2 Meet and Confer. The Challenging Party will initiate the dispute
25 resolution process under Local Rule 37.1 et seq.

26 6.3 The burden of persuasion in any such challenge proceeding will be on
27 the Designating Party. Frivolous challenges, and those made for an improper
28 purpose (e.g., to harass or impose unnecessary expenses and burdens on other

1 parties) may expose the Challenging Party to sanctions. Unless the Designating
2 Party has waived or withdrawn the confidentiality designation, all parties will
3 continue to afford the material in question the level of protection to which it is
4 entitled under the Producing Party's designation until the Court rules on the
5 challenge.

6 **7. ACCESS TO AND USE OF PROTECTED MATERIAL**

7 7.1 Basic Principles. A Receiving Party may use Protected Material that is
8 disclosed or produced by another Party or by a Non-Party in connection with this
9 Action only for prosecuting, defending, or attempting to settle this Action. Such
10 Protected Material may be disclosed only to the categories of persons and under
11 the conditions described in this Order. When the Action has been terminated, a
12 Receiving Party must comply with the provisions of section 13 below (FINAL
13 DISPOSITION).

14 Protected Material must be stored and maintained by a Receiving Party at a
15 location and in a secure manner that ensures that access is limited to the persons
16 authorized under this Order.

17 7.2 Disclosure of "CONFIDENTIAL" Information or Items. Unless
18 otherwise ordered by the court or permitted in writing by the Designating Party, a
19 Receiving Party may disclose any information or item designated
20 "CONFIDENTIAL" only to:

21 (a) the Receiving Party's Outside Counsel of Record in this Action, as well
22 as employees of said Outside Counsel of Record to whom it is reasonably
23 necessary to disclose the information for this Action;

24 (b) the officers, directors, and employees (including House Counsel) of the
25 Receiving Party to whom disclosure is reasonably necessary for this Action;

26 (c) Experts (as defined in this Order) of the Receiving Party to whom
27 disclosure is reasonably necessary for this Action and who have signed the
28 "Acknowledgment and Agreement to Be Bound" (Exhibit A);

(d) the Court and its personnel;

(e) court reporters and their staff;

(f) professional jury or trial consultants, mock jurors, and Professional

4 Vendors to whom disclosure is reasonably necessary for this Action and who have
5 signed the “Acknowledgment and Agreement to Be Bound” (Exhibit A);

(g) the author or recipient of a document containing the information or a
custodian or other person who otherwise possessed or knew the information;

(h) during their depositions, witnesses, and attorneys for witnesses, in the Action to whom disclosure is reasonably necessary provided: (1) the deposing party requests that the witness sign the form attached as Exhibit A hereto; and (2) they will not be permitted to keep any confidential information unless they sign the "Acknowledgment and Agreement to Be Bound" (Exhibit A), unless otherwise agreed by the Designating Party or ordered by the court. Pages of transcribed deposition testimony or exhibits to depositions that reveal Protected Material may be separately bound by the court reporter and may not be disclosed to anyone except as permitted under this Stipulated Protective Order; and

(i) any mediator or settlement officer, and their supporting personnel, mutually agreed upon by any of the parties engaged in settlement discussions.

19 **8. PROTECTED MATERIAL SUBPOENAED OR ORDERED PRODUCED**
20 **IN OTHER LITIGATION**

If a Party is served with a subpoena or a court order issued in other litigation that compels disclosure of any information or items designated in this Action as "CONFIDENTIAL," that Party must:

24 (a) promptly notify in writing the Designating Party. Such notification will
25 include a copy of the subpoena or court order;

(b) promptly notify in writing the party who caused the subpoena or order to issue in the other litigation that some or all of the material covered by the subpoena

1 or order is subject to this Protective Order. Such notification will include a copy of
2 this Stipulated Protective Order; and

3 (c) cooperate with respect to all reasonable procedures sought to be pursued
4 by the Designating Party whose Protected Material may be affected.

5 If the Designating Party timely seeks a protective order, the Party served
6 with the subpoena or court order will not produce any information designated in
7 this action as “CONFIDENTIAL” before a determination by the court from which
8 the subpoena or order issued, unless the Party has obtained the Designating Party’s
9 permission. The Designating Party will bear the burden and expense of seeking
10 protection in that court of its confidential material and nothing in these provisions
11 should be construed as authorizing or encouraging a Receiving Party in this Action
12 to disobey a lawful directive from another court.

13 **9. A NON-PARTY’S PROTECTED MATERIAL SOUGHT TO BE
14 PRODUCED IN THIS LITIGATION**

15 (a) The terms of this Order are applicable to information produced by a Non-
16 Party in this Action and designated as “CONFIDENTIAL.” Such information
17 produced by Non-Parties in connection with this litigation is protected by the
18 remedies and relief provided by this Order. Nothing in these provisions should be
19 construed as prohibiting a Non-Party from seeking additional protections.

20 (b) In the event that a Party is required, by a valid discovery request, to
21 produce a Non-Party’s confidential information in its possession, and the Party is
22 subject to an agreement with the Non-Party not to produce the Non-Party’s
23 confidential information, then the Party will:

24 (1) promptly notify in writing the Requesting Party and the Non-Party
25 that some or all of the information requested is subject to a confidentiality
26 agreement with a Non-Party;

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(2) promptly provide the Non-Party with a copy of the Stipulated Protective Order in this Action, the relevant discovery request(s), and a reasonably specific description of the information requested; and

(3) make the information requested available for inspection by the Non-Party, if requested.

(c) If the Non-Party fails to seek a protective order from this court within 14 days of receiving the notice and accompanying information, the Receiving Party may produce the Non-Party's confidential information responsive to the discovery request. If the Non-Party timely seeks a protective order, the Receiving Party shall not produce any information in its possession or control that is subject to the confidentiality agreement with the Non-Party before a determination by the court. Absent a court order to the contrary, the Non-Party shall bear the burden and expense of seeking protection in this court of its Protected Material.

10. UNAUTHORIZED DISCLOSURE OF PROTECTED MATERIAL

If a Receiving Party learns that, by inadvertence or otherwise, it has disclosed Protected Material to any person or in any circumstance not authorized under this Stipulated Protective Order, the Receiving Party must immediately (a) notify in writing the Designating Party of the unauthorized disclosures, (b) use its best efforts to retrieve all unauthorized copies of the Protected Material, (c) inform the person or persons to whom unauthorized disclosures were made of all the terms of this Order, and (d) request such person or persons to execute the “Acknowledgment and Agreement to Be Bound” that is attached hereto as Exhibit A.

11. INADVERTENT PRODUCTION OF PRIVILEGED OR OTHERWISE PROTECTED MATERIAL

When a Producing Party gives notice to Receiving Parties that certain inadvertently produced material is subject to a claim of privilege or other protection, the obligations of the Receiving Parties are those set forth in Federal

1 Rule of Civil Procedure 26(b)(5)(B). This provision is not intended to modify
2 whatever procedure may be established in an e-discovery order that provides for
3 production without prior privilege review. Pursuant to Federal Rule of Evidence
4 502(d) and (e), insofar as the parties reach an agreement on the effect of disclosure
5 of a communication or information covered by the attorney-client privilege or
6 work product protection, the parties may incorporate their agreement in the
7 stipulated protective order submitted to the court.

8 **12. MISCELLANEOUS**

9 12.1 Right to Further Relief. Nothing in this Order abridges the right of any
10 person to seek its modification by the Court in the future.

11 12.2 Right to Assert Other Objections. By stipulating to the entry of this
12 Protective Order no Party waives any right it otherwise would have to object to
13 disclosing or producing any information or item on any ground not addressed in
14 this Stipulated Protective Order. Similarly, no Party waives any right to object on
15 any ground to use in evidence of any of the material covered by this Protective
16 Order.

17 12.3 Filing Protected Material. A Party that seeks to file under seal any
18 Protected Material must comply with Civil Local Rule 79-5. Protected Material
19 may only be filed under seal pursuant to a court order authorizing the sealing of the
20 specific Protected Material at issue. If a Party's request to file Protected Material
21 under seal is denied by the court, then the Receiving Party may file the information
22 in the public record unless otherwise instructed by the court.

23 **13. FINAL DISPOSITION**

24 After the final disposition of this Action, as defined in paragraph 4, within
25 60 days of a written request by the Designating Party, each Receiving Party must
26 return all Protected Material to the Producing Party or destroy such material. As
27 used in this subdivision, "all Protected Material" includes all copies, abstracts,
28 compilations, summaries, and any other format reproducing or capturing any of the

1 Protected Material. Whether the Protected Material is returned or destroyed, the
2 Receiving Party must submit a written certification to the Producing Party (and, if
3 not the same person or entity, to the Designating Party) by the 60 day deadline that
4 (1) identifies (by category, where appropriate) all the Protected Material that was
5 returned or destroyed and (2) affirms that the Receiving Party has not retained any
6 copies, abstracts, compilations, summaries or any other format reproducing or
7 capturing any of the Protected Material. Notwithstanding this provision, Counsel
8 are entitled to retain an archival copy of all pleadings, motion papers, trial,
9 deposition, and hearing transcripts, legal memoranda, correspondence, deposition
10 and trial exhibits, expert reports, attorney work product, and consultant and expert
11 work product, even if such materials contain Protected Material. Any such archival
12 copies that contain or constitute Protected Material remain subject to this
13 Protective Order as set forth in Section 4 (DURATION).

14 **14. SANCTIONS**

15 Any willful violation of this Order may be punished by civil or criminal
16 contempt proceedings, financial or evidentiary sanctions, reference to disciplinary
17 authorities, or other appropriate action at the discretion of the Court.

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1 IT IS SO STIPULATED, THROUGH COUNSEL OF RECORD.

2 DATED: May 31, 2023

3 WILLIAMS WOLLITZ HAKAKIAN, PC

4 By: /s/ Mina Hakakian

5 Mina Hakakian

6 Attorneys for Plaintiffs

7 NOVEON SURGERY CENTER, INC.

8 DATED: May 31, 2023

9 COLE PEDROZA LLP

10 By:

11 Kenneth R. Pedroza

12 Joshua C. Traver

13 Susannah D. Dahlberg

14 Attorneys for Defendants

15 CIGNA HEALTH AND LIFE INSURANCE
16 COMPANY and CONNECTICUT
17 GENERAL LIFE INSURANCE COMPANY

18 Pursuant to Local Rule 5-4.3.4(a)(2), I hereby attest that all signatories listed
19 above, and on whose behalf this filing is submitted, concur in the filing's content
20 and have authorized the filing.

21 DATED: May 31, 2023

22 COLE PEDROZA LLP

23 By:

24 Kenneth R. Pedroza

25 Joshua C. Traver

26 Susannah D. Dahlberg

27 Attorneys for Defendants

28 CIGNA HEALTH AND LIFE INSURANCE
COMPANY and CONNECTICUT
GENERAL LIFE INSURANCE COMPANY

1 FOR GOOD CAUSE SHOWN, IT IS SO ORDERED.
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DATED: 8/28/2023



HON. MARGO A. ROCCONI
United States Magistrate Judge

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EXHIBIT A

ACKNOWLEDGMENT AND AGREEMENT TO BE BOUND

I, _____ [print or type full name], of _____ [print or type full address], declare under penalty of perjury have read in its entirety and understand the Stipulated Protective Order that issued by the United States District Court for the Central District of California _____ [date] in the case of _____ [insert formal case name and the
ers and initials assigned to it by the court]. I agree to comply with and to be
l by all the terms of this Stipulated Protective Order and I understand and
owledge that failure to so comply could expose me to sanctions and
hment in the nature of contempt. I solemnly promise that I will not disclose in
hanner any information or item that is subject to this Stipulated Protective
r to any person or entity except in strict compliance with the provisions of this
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I further agree to submit to the jurisdiction of the United States District Court for the Central District of California for the purpose of enforcing the terms of this Stipulated Protective Order, even if such enforcement proceedings occur after termination of this action. I hereby appoint _____ [print or type full name] of _____ [print or type full address and telephone number] as my California agent for service of process in connection with this action or any proceedings related to enforcement of this Stipulated Protective Order.

Date:

City and State where signed:

Printed name:

Signature: